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The casts are small, and very spirited and accurate, affording pleasing decorations for a working room and excellent models for study. Copies of some of the finest old Italian low reliefs and busts are also beginning to appear, and are well worth the trifling sums asked for them. They are best left white, if to be used to draw from; but for decoration they should be ivoryized by immersion in a solution of paraffine in turpentine of the consistency of thin oil, or damar varnish. They can be painted with the solution, but immersion secures a more equal color, as the plaster absorbs the compound with greater evenness.

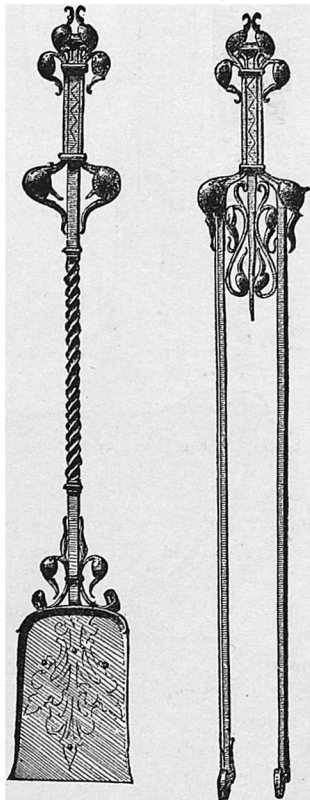
PERSIAN RUGS AND CARPETS.

S. G. W. BENJAMIN, the well-known art critic, who is now United States Consul-General at Teheran, has sent to the State Department a long and interesting report on the famous carpets of Persia. He says there are four leading classes of these carpets—the large-sized, the rugs, the ghileem or knitted goods, and the namáds or felt carpets. Carpets produced in Irak are called pharaghans, and are firmer than other Persian carpets. Large-sized carpets must be made to order. "Besides the pharaghan carpets (says Mr. Benjamin) floors are also carpeted sometimes with fabrics from Kerwanshab, Hawadan, and the district of Lauristan. Also for this purpose the carpets of Mech-Kabad, in Khorassen, are available, although of inferior texture to the pharaghan. The carpets of Kerwan have the texture fitted to the rough usage required in covering floors; but while perhaps of superior quality to the pharaghan, they are always small and proportionately more expensive.

"The Persian carpet par excellence is the rug. The Persians use these in preference to large sizes. First covering the earth floor with a hasseer or matting of split reeds, they lay over it many rugs, which completely conceal the mat. This arrangement, when

two rugs are altogether identical. But in other classes, such as the rugs of Kerwan, Dyochehan, or Kurdistan, there is endless variety in design and texture.

"A point to be considered is that while the small carpets of Persia go under the general designation of



MODERN FRENCH FIRE-IRONS.

rugs, it would be a serious mistake to consider them all as merely carpets of small size intended to be trod on by heavy shoes. In the first place Persians, when at home, take off their shoes, and thus a carpet of fine, delicate woof and design will last for ages, and actually improve with use such as this. In the second place, a large proportion of the rugs of Persia, and especially the finer grades, are never intended to be laid on the floor, but to cover divans or tables, or to hang as tapestries and portières.

"This explains the extreme fineness of texture and velvety surface which many of these rugs display, and also accounts for the fringe at the ends. Some of the rugs of Kerwan are almost as fine as cashmere shawls. The designs of these rugs were formerly of a large pattern, with a general ground of red, white, or some other uniform tint with borders and details of minute tracery harmonizing with rather than disturbing the general effect. These patterns are unquestionably of higher artistic importance, exhibiting a quality designated by artists as breadth.

"At present, while there is apparently no difference in texture, there is an evident tendency toward smaller designs, which lose much of the effect unless seen with close inspection. Perhaps this is only the result of a reaction from long-established custom, and it must be conceded that the modern designs of Persian rugs are more popular with the average European and American buyer.

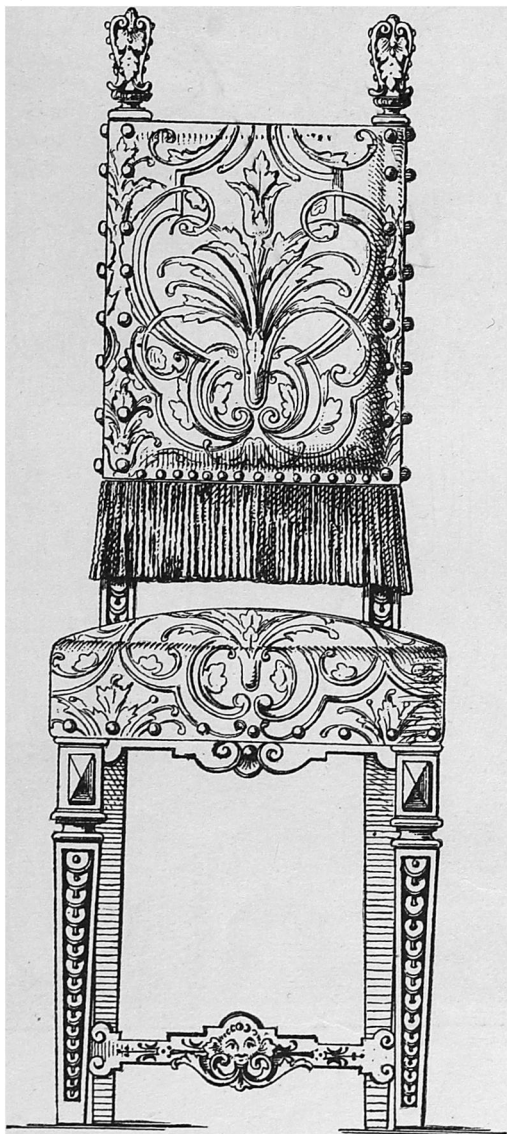
"The colors formerly employed in the rugs of Persia were imperishable. Rugs one hundred years old show no deterioration in tint, but rather a softness such as old paintings assume. The introduction of aniline dyes at one time threatened to ruin the manufacture of textile fabrics in Persia, but the law against the employment of aniline dyes enacted by the Persian Government is enforced with rigor.

"The namáds or felt carpets of Persia, although produced by a process which perhaps excludes them from the list of strictly textile fabrics, may yet properly be considered in this report. The namád is made by forming a frame of the thickness intended or excavating a place in the ground floor of the size and depth equivalent to the namád intended. The hair is laid in this and beaten with mallets until the original disjointed mass has obtained cohesion and is reduced to the dimensions of the frame. A design of colored threads is beaten into the upper surface, sometimes quite effective. The namád, however, is desirable less for its beauty than the complete sense of comfort which it affords. It is much thicker than other car-

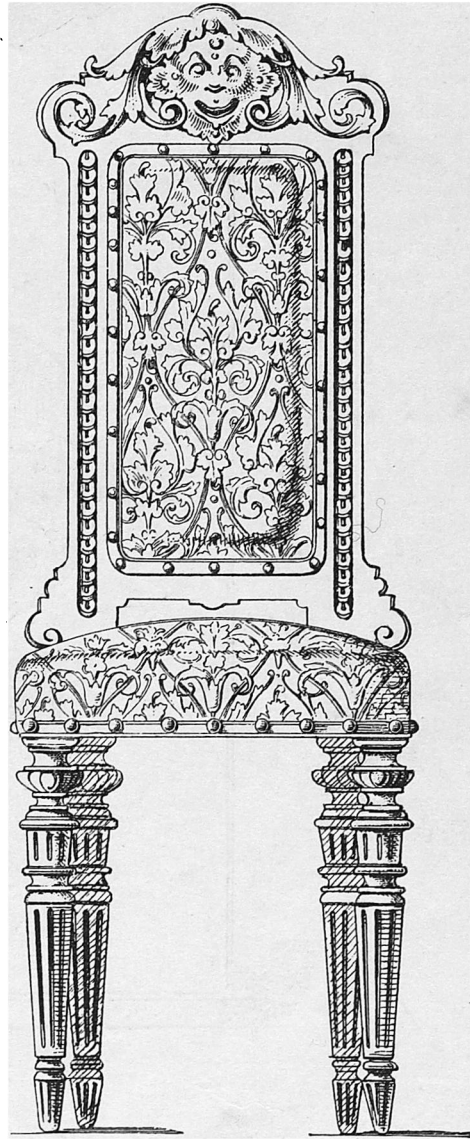
pets, and the sensation to the tread is luxurious. No carpet has ever been manufactured that is more suitable for the comfort of a sleeping room in winter. Of course there is a difference in the quality of these namáds, but the dearest are far cheaper than the same surface of carpets or rugs woven in the usual styles. The great weight and clumsiness of the namáds must unfortunately prevent their exportation to any extent until the means of transport are improved. The best quality of namád is made at Isfahán, but the most massive are produced at Yezd. One would imagine that the size of the namád must necessarily be limited. But, on the contrary, the regular Persian carpets rarely equal and never exceed the dimensions of some namáds. The namád is more often than the carpets intended to cover an entire floor, elegant rugs being laid over it in places. I have seen a namád seventy-five feet long by nearly forty wide in one piece.

"There is one species of rug special to Persia often spoken of, but rarely seen. I refer to the rugs made of silk. It is not uncommon to see rugs of the finer types with silken fringes, and sometimes with a woof of silk in the body of the rug. But all-silk rugs are rare, and rarer now than formerly. They are generally small, and intended for luxury rather than use. The price is necessarily very high. The chief of the merchants of Teheran told me of one he had seen over a tomb; it was barely two square yards in size; but he said that two hundred tomans, or \$360, would be a low price for it."

To the artistic mind, the growing use of wrought iron for decorative purposes is one of the cheering signs of the times. There is no better example of this than in the American Art Galleries, where the metal work is one of the features of the architect's success. The approach to the entrance,



MODERN GERMAN DINING-ROOM CHAIR.



MODERN GERMAN HALL CHAIR.

composed of rugs of harmonious designs, is very rich, while the cost is actually less than if one large carpet were employed instead. The varieties of Persian rugs are numerous. In some sorts, like the Turkowan, there is a general similarity of design, although no

between iron fences of graceful design but strong construction, is especially novel and picturesque. The ornamentation of the gas fixtures in the galleries is another proof of how very little it takes to beautify a commonplace object, if one has the necessary taste.